

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**A Survey on Students' Perceptions on Teachers'
Scaffolding in Teaching Writing for Science and
Technology Brief Report**

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**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Education (TESL)**

Faculty of Education

April 2009

ABSTRACT

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This research is conducted to identify area of learning which students think is more significant to be highlighted when teachers scaffold writing instructions of brief reports, focusing on the first theme, 'Nature and Resources' only. It also attempts to identify type of scaffolding activity that students mostly preferred in everyday classroom of English for Science and Technology (EST) lessons and to examine its relevance in helping students to be independent writers. Form 4 EST students of SMK Tebakang are involved in this study. This study has implemented two instruments; a set of self-constructed questionnaires adapted from MacKenzie (1999) and semi-structured interviews. About 155 questionnaires are distributed to the respondents and only 152 are returned. Only 20 respondents are selected for the semi-structured interviews. Based on the findings of the study, the respondents believe that EST teachers should scaffold on language area when teaching writing because they claimed that if they are not proficient in English Language, they fail to understand the content knowledge and later have difficulty to convey ideas and justify opinions in writing form. Moreover, they claim they need to acquire certain and important language features when writing brief reports. Apart from that, they also believe that EST teachers should continue to scaffold acquisition of content knowledge. According to the respondents, if they are lack of the content knowledge, they will not be able to present information and to justify their ideas. Activity that the respondents claim to be effective when teachers scaffold writing instructions is group works. Furthermore, there are activities embedded in group works such as in class projects like preparing scrap book or pamphlets, group presentations, discussions like preparing drafts and completing worksheets. However, EST teachers need to be aware as students admitted that they were comfortable working in groups because they were able to switch to Bahasa Melayu. This will defeat the main objective of studying EST.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the background to the study. It provides the statement of the problem, significance of the study, research objectives, research questions and definition of terms. It also gives details of the role of teacher in scaffolding writing brief report in English For Science and Technology daily lessons.

1.1 Scaffolding Instructions in English for Science and Technology

Scaffolding instruction is a teaching strategy that involves active participation of a teacher and students. The idea of scaffolding originates from Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory and his concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

The term scaffolding is used in the works of Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976). In their works, teacher or peer offered assistance to learners. Those who provide assistance are those who are more capable or knowledgeable than the learners themselves.

Scaffolding is therefore, a support for learning. These supports could be clues, reminders, providing confidence and motivation, breaking the problems into steps, providing models, or strategies that allows student to grow and become independence learner (Woolfolk, 2001). This study focuses on the students' perception on the role of English for Science and Technology (EST) teachers, in the daily classroom particularly in the area of writing.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Malaysians need to be proficient in English Language due to globalization and the need to communicate to those in the foreign shore and also locally. Consequently, introducing the new subject to the upper secondary students is seen as one way to continue the emphasis on science and technology as it is 'essential for students to access information on science and technology in English.'

(Form 4 and 5, Curriculum Specifications, 2003)

On 28 October 2000, the Minister of Education, asked the Centre of Curriculum Development to develop a special English language curriculum for students of Science and technology stream. A special meeting was conducted to design a new curriculum to cater this new subject. In 2003, students in the upper secondary schools were able to take this subject as an elective subject.

English for Science and Technology subject is introduced first, 'to provide learners with the language basis to access and understand materials on science and technology in English and secondly, to express ideas and concepts in English.'

(http://www.moe.gov.my/bpk/sp_hsp/bi/kbsm/hsp_estf4n5)